

Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

I want to thank you for providing me with this opportunity to provide testimony to your committee. I am Jay R. Lieberman, MD and I am the Director of the New England Musculoskeletal Institute and Chairman of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Connecticut Health Center. I came to the University of Connecticut approximately 2 ½ years ago after spending 15 years at the University of California School of Medicine where I was Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery. I came to Connecticut because the New England Musculoskeletal Institute offers us a unique opportunity to advance musculoskeletal health care for the patients in this state and beyond. Our mission is to provide excellent care, teach medical students and residents, and to perform cutting edge research. A novel aspect of the MSI is that because we are in one facility clinicians from various musculoskeletal healthcare subspecialties and scientists can actually work together on providing integrated care and on developing bench to bedside advancements. Researchers in the MSI have received support from the Connecticut Stem Cell Program and we are trying to use stem cells to promote fracture healing and cartilage repair. In addition, in our biomechanics and bioskills labs our sports medicine physicians develop and evaluate new techniques for shoulder and knee surgery that have been used on our patients. Augustus Mazzocca, MD one of our sports medicine physicians developed a procedure that was used this fall to treat Curt Schilling the pitcher for the Boston Red Sox and he assisted on the surgical procedure.

During my brief tenure at UConn we have been able to rapidly grow our program for two major reasons. First, our integrated model of healthcare is unique. Second, the Medical Arts and Research Building is a brand new facility that is attractive to patients and staff. However, my concern is we are not going to be able to continue to recruit and retain talented faculty because of the quality of our inpatient facilities. For example, over the next 5 years computer assisted surgery and cell based therapies will be common in orthopaedic surgery. One of the problems we will have with our present facility is that the operating rooms are small and it will be difficult to accommodate the technology that is going to be used routinely in patients. Second, the patient care facilities in John Dempsey Hospital are antiquated. The floor plans were developed in the 1960's and we provide care in a different manner now in 2009. We do not have separate corridors for different surgical subspecialties so all the patients are in one area. This does not optimize patient care efficiency. In addition, the current set up makes it quite noisy during the day. Finally, there are few private rooms for sick patients. There is very limited conference room space to meet with family members, or to hold seminars for medical students and residents. Our patients, staff and students deserve a top notch facility.

One of our major missions is to teach residents and medical students. Because of declining reimbursement and increased costs it is difficult for physicians in the community to find the time to teach residents and medical students. It is essential that we have a full-time faculty that are truly committed to education. Presently there are approximately 50 orthopaedic surgeons who now practice in the state of Connecticut from our orthopaedic residency program. However, an orthopaedic residency program

can be no better than its academic health center. Our program has a number of nationally recognized clinicians and scientists. If these individuals leave the University because the facilities are not deemed adequate the quality of medical student education and the resident education will decline. This will also happen in other subspecialties. This will have a negative impact on patient care in less than a decade.

We are quite excited about the potential for an alliance with Hartford Hospital. This University Hospital on two campuses will be one of the largest University Hospitals in the United States. There is a certain advantage that comes with such size. The implementation of system-wide purchasing and quality programs would enhance care and improve our bottom line. In addition, there is a certain amount of prestige that comes with being such a large center. I think this would facilitate recruitment of new surgeons and physicians into the New England Musculoskeletal Institute and the School of Medicine. Hartford Hospital is a level one trauma center. It would fit with our mission to use stem cells to enhance the care of trauma patients. One of our goals would be to recruit talented trauma surgeons that would improve the care of these patients and to develop cutting edge therapies for trauma patients throughout the region.

This is a special opportunity in the history of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Health Center. The building of a new hospital and the alliance with Hartford Hospital would enable us to have the resources to develop into one of the elite healthcare systems in United States. This would enable us to attract top medical students, residents and academic faculty into the new University Hospital and School of Medicine. This clearly would benefit all the patients in the state for many years to come. Our population is aging and our younger patients are demanding more active lifestyles. A new hospital will enable our clinical and research programs to flourish and will help us to meet the expectations of the residents of the state of Connecticut.